

A photograph of a rustic stone wall with a rectangular window opening. The wall is constructed from irregular, light-colored stones. The window looks out onto a dense thicket of green leaves and plants. The overall scene is bright and natural.

The Huron Literary Magazine

FIRST ISSUE

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"But when he suddenly came to in the middle of the night, he could not control himself. Who can tell what distances he covered on his way back? Who knows what phantoms he battled?"

And now that he was at home with his dear loved ones, he felt compelled to share his overwhelming joy, a joy of return and rebirth."

-The Unbearable Lightness of Being, by Milan Kundera



Special Thanks

To all of the contributors, thank you, for sharing your talents.

Thank you

Kendra Handcock

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Dr. John Hope

Dr. Thomas Peace

Ryan Rabie

And Dr. Scott Schofield

You all especially have been so inspiring to me as I pursued my ideas and curiosity by making this magazine a reality. Thank you—for simply being the wonderful people that you are.

Foreword

This magazine came about as a desire to have a place to share creative writing. I enjoyed planning and thinking about what the magazine that I would like to make as an indulgent dream. To be honest, I did not have high hopes for the first issue. Then each writer showcased in this magazine proved me wrong. These students from across all years of study eagerly submitted their writings that could only have been created far before the rushed submission period I set. I was (and still am) honoured. These very competent and passionate writers not only wished to trust me and my dream for this magazine, but were ready to share their writing and only needed the opportunity to do so.

Each writer has their own section, with their own colour and name proudly displayed alongside. I invite you to dive in. Immerse yourself in each story, but remember and celebrate the writer alongside the title. This magazine would not exist without their eagerness to write and share their writings with others. This is a magazine to celebrate the writers and the photographers who share their work in this magazine, both to celebrate their achievements and to encourage others who want to express themselves creatively to do so.

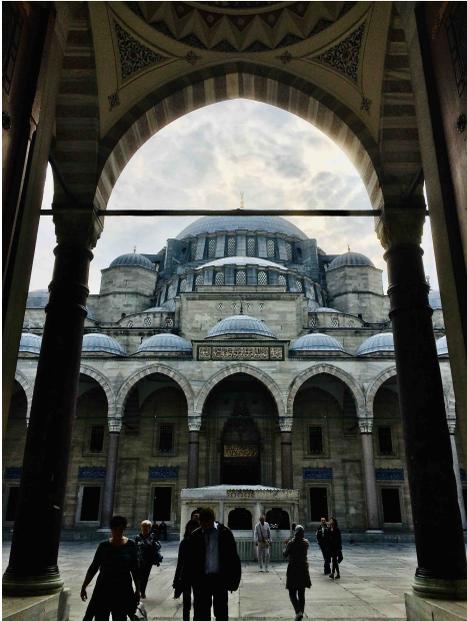
Enjoy!

- Ethan Coleman

Ethan Coleman



Hamish Fallowfield



Sage Milne



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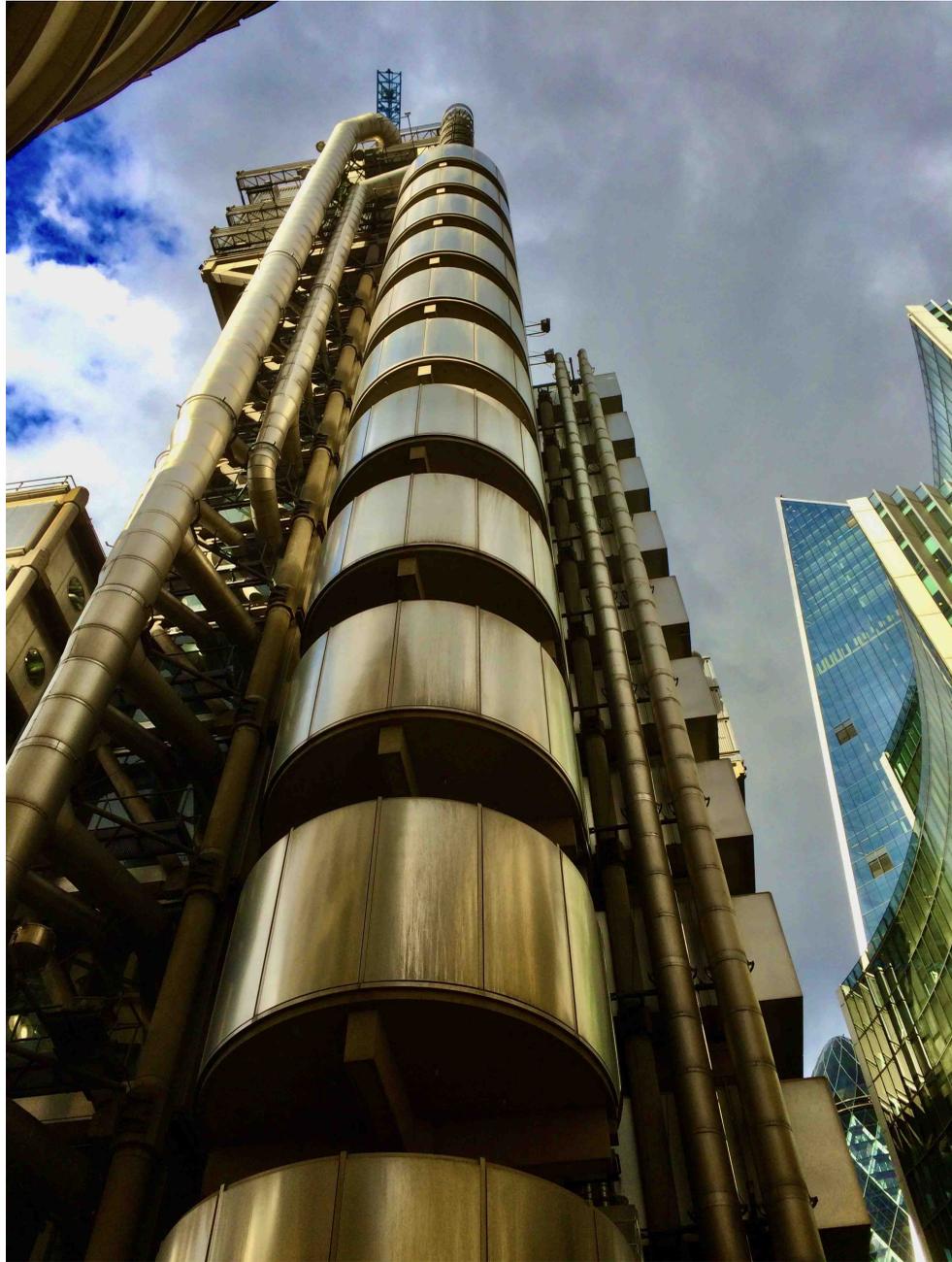
Cover and Magazine design by Ethan Coleman
Cover Photograph credit to Ethan Coleman



Ziyana
Kotadida

Cherry Lozenge Moments

i write out of grief for the versions of me that have forgotten the glow of
friday evenings in june with strawberry stains on my lips
and watermelon edibles melting in my mouth,
stapling sticky-note moments into my notebooks,
wary the wind will lift them away like a stranger's offer to dance.
some call it an art –
i call it a compulsion,
wrapping words around my fingers like ribbon-bow reminders,
binding pages with my prized memories:
(golden gratitude afternoons in my mother's garden,
graduation night laughter bursting from my vocal chords like a trumpet's
orgasm,
the first time someone painted my skin ultraviolet).
moments like these are sweet enough to be mistaken for cherry lozenges,
so i hold them in my mouth,
trace letters over them with my tongue,
seal envelop edges with their taste.
time twists around me like a pixie ring,
rambling like a spiral staircase or
coiling like thread bound around my grandmother's old spool.
the summer tide surges & stretches:
nothing romanticizes it quite like poetry.



Hamish Fallowfield

10

Photography

Andrew
Stokes

Caterpillar Life

Kid on far world
kind burning sand
out, all over
taking the sights

the young eye-flesh
forever sees
can be here, there
in spite of world

and feathers burst
as I, rip the
false skin; this hei
-nous body, this...

my chuckled flesh
a pleading shake
Tired red steps,
get rest and move

But I feel it
over again.
Who is the end?
Who is inside?

more world comes up
how do gears turn?

how/what are we
to do, supposed.

They ate the fruit;
we live with that
we live from that
of course, of course

Ripped in a half
only then can
you become great
become person

theres that idea
what they must say
'be forged through flame'
because if not

why be here, there
nothing less than
banging the bricks
in a glass world

that's what they said;
such big leaders
were wrong,
they were wrong.

rest, change, people,
all are needed
Laurels!

not to flame

and there is more...
to live stories,
friendship
bonds are life.



Hamish Fallowfield

15

Photography

Emmett
Dalzilio

Rift

When they had almost reached the abandoned factory, Meredith tugged on Ani's sleeve to stop her. "How are we supposed to go in?" Meredith whispered to her. "Through the front door, or...?"

Ani frowned, then pulled out the tablet she used to communicate. "I didn't think that far," she admitted, her robotic voice playing quietly from the tablet's speakers. "Is it a bit late in the day for the front door?"

Meredith winced. "I think so." She scanned their surroundings. "On the bright side, it looks pretty abandoned from the outside — not a lot of light, no cameras I can see, that kind of thing." She grimaced. "Ani, *please* don't make me get arrested for breaking and entering."

"You chose to come with me," Ani pointed out.

Meredith sighed. "I didn't know *this* was what I was getting into." She shook her head before Ani could type more than a few words in reply. "Let's just... be careful."

Ani tapped Meredith on the shoulder, motioning to a window left ajar. Meredith held her hands out to boost Ani in through the window before following her in.

The room they entered seemed to be some sort of break room. Meredith was still taking in her surroundings when she heard the door open.

Everyone froze, including the person in the doorway. She looked a few years younger than Meredith and Ani, probably in her late teens. Her eyes were wide in shock.

“Oops,” Meredith said.

Ani looked at Meredith frantically. Whoever the teenager was, she might not be willing to wait for Ani to type out an explanation.

Meredith stifled a grimace. “Sorry,” she blurted out. “We’ll just be on our way then, yeah? Didn’t mean to intrude.” As she spoke, spitting the words out as fast as she could, Meredith stepped back toward the window, nudging Ani to do the same.

“Wait!” The teenager looked conflicted, wringing her hands. “Can you- Are you good at keeping a secret?”

Meredith and Ani exchanged a look, and Ani nodded. “Of course,” Meredith replied. “Why?”

The teenager hesitated. “I think... I think you should come with me,” she said. “There’s something I want to show you.”

Another exchanged glance. “Follow her and hope it doesn’t bite us in the ass?” Meredith muttered to Ani.

Ani winced, but eventually nodded.

“Of course,” Meredith muttered. “Not like either of us will be able to put it to rest until we’ve found the answer.”

“Especially not you,” Ani said.

Meredith sighed. “On we go, then.”

“My parents work here,” the teenager — Mel, apparently — explained. “I help out sometimes for volunteer hours, but it’s...”

“It looks a bit sketchy,” Meredith said. “No offense.”

Mel laughed weakly. “None taken,” she replied. “It’s... yeah.” They walked through a corridor until they reached a heavily reinforced door. “Through here,” Mel said.

Meredith’s eyes widened as the door opened. “What is *that*,” she breathed.

Behind the door, the room was awash with a strange glow,

blues and purples and silvers all mingling together. On the far wall, floating in a large otherwise-empty tank, was the source of the glow: a strange, shifting creature, sometimes humanoid, sometimes more akin to a cloud of gas. It pressed its hands against the glass and left after-images in the air where its hands had been moments before.

Meredith was horrified.

Meredith was *fascinated*.

"Is it alive?" Ani asked.

Mel frowned briefly at Ani's tablet but didn't comment on it. "Seems like it," she replied. "'What is that' is exactly what, uh- the adults are trying to figure out."

Ani frowned. "Meredith, emotions?"

Meredith derailed her train of thought — mostly consisting of countless questions she had about the creature — to look closer at the creature. "Hard to tell," she replied. "I mean, it doesn't exactly have a face—"

The creature shifted again, and several mouths appeared on its otherwise featureless face, all in slightly different frowns.

Meredith yelped in surprise. "*Shit!* Okay!" Addressing Ani, she said, "Seems pretty upset to me!"

"Then should we help it?" Ani replied.

"That's- complicated," Mel said. "I mean- first of all, where are you going to put it? It's not like people will be *okay* with something like this out roaming around, and- and second, it's kind of- from what I've been told, it seems pretty dangerous, so I don't- it might be like letting a tiger out of the zoo, in terms of how likely you or others are to get mauled? Maybe?"

Ani furrowed her brows. "Okay," she said, "But I don't like the idea of leaving it here." She turned to Mel. "Are they at least treating it well?"

Mel grimaced. "Not... exactly," she said.

Ani turned to Meredith, who sighed. "We can't do anything at the moment," Meredith said. "Let's just... learn as much as we can, and hope that some of it includes a reasonable way to get this—" She gestured at the creature. "—Out of here."

Ani frowned but nodded.

Meredith turned back to Mel. "Do you know if we'd be able to come back later?" She asked.

Mel frowned. "I... guess? I mean- the people who work here could be a problem, but—"

"Would you be willing to give us your number or something like that so we can coordinate future visits?" Meredith asked. She grinned. "Totally alright if not, obviously."

Mel's frown deepened. "...Sure," she replied. "But then you should probably go before someone notices you're here."

"...Good point," Meredith said. Numbers were exchanged, and then Meredith and Ani left through the same window they'd entered through.

Once the duo was a safe distance away, they began to relax, and exchanged a glance. "What the actual hell," Ani said.

Meredith nodded. "What the *hell*."

The next day, Meredith and Ani created a group chat with Mel, and the three of them exchanged messages about the creature and what to do next. Eventually, after much pestering from Meredith, Mel was able to find a time to sneak Meredith and Ani back into the facility. They crept in under the cover of night and retraced their steps back to the reinforced door and the room with the creature.

Meredith stared at the creature. "It understood when I said it was hard to figure out its feelings without a face," she said. "That means it understands English, right?"

Mel frowned. "Maybe," she said.

Meredith stepped forward. "Hello," she told the creature. "My name's Meredith Harlow, this-" She jabbed a thumb over at Ani- "Is Anita Reyes Araullo, and that-" A thumb jab at Mel- "Is Mel...?"

"Melissa Gujic," Mel finished.

Meredith nodded. "Or just Meredith, Ani, and Mel. Can you speak?"

The creature shifted, and a mouth appeared on its face. The mouth moved, but no sound came out.

"That's okay," Meredith started to say. Before she could continue, though, more mouths appeared on the creature, and it spoke.

Hello

Hello

Hello

My

My name

My name is

My name

It was hard to

Hard to figure out

Help it?

"What the *hell*-" Meredith hissed, covering her ears.

"Do you not know your name?" Mel asked. "Or is it something that doesn't translate into our speech well?"

What the

Hell

Hell

Hell

Name?

Doesn't translate

translate

“What’s in a name?” Ani said with a lopsided grin. Turning back to Mel and Meredith, she added, “It might not translate as a concept.”

The creature nodded in a jittery motion.

“Learns fast,” Meredith murmured. Absently, she reached out to the glass between the creature and the rest of them.

“No!” Mel launched herself onto Meredith to stop her from making contact.

Meredith turned to Mel with a scowl. “What are you *doing*?” She asked Mel.

“What are *you* doing?” Mel shot back. “It’s *dangerous*.”

“It’s behind what looks like pretty thick glass!” Meredith shook off Mel’s arms and crossed her own against her chest.

Mel sighed. “I forget you don’t know everything yet,” she muttered. “You know how... shifty it is?”

“That’s one way to phrase it,” Meredith said. “Yes?”

“It did something like that to the glass. We don’t know what exactly it did, but- watch.” Mel took a pencil from one of the tables in the room, held it up by her head in a prolonged ‘ready to throw’ pose, and tossed it against the glass. It bounced off the surface, then *shifted* like the creature, looking almost like a computer glitch in real life. It landed on the ground, continuing to shift and glitch.

Mel turned back to Meredith’s startled face. “I don’t know how that’d translate over to a human, but you- you can see why I’m not exactly keen on finding out, right?”

“I... can, yes,” Meredith distantly replied. “I’ll avoid touching the glass.”

Mel looked pained and deeply grateful. “Thank you.”

When Meredith and Ani got back to their apartment,

Meredith was quiet.

“Penny for your thoughts?” Ani asked.

Meredith shook her head. “There’s nothing concrete enough to share yet,” she said. Her mind was racing, but it was all half-formed thoughts and feelings that she struggled to put into words.

“If you say so,” Ani replied. “It’s late. I’m going to sleep, and you should, too.”

Meredith sighed. “Alright.” But when Meredith laid down in her bed, her thoughts continued to churn away long into the night.

A few days of deliberation later, Meredith opened a private text conversation with Mel and set up a meeting between the two of them at one of the local parks that weekend. When the day arrived, and Meredith sat down at a picnic table across from Mel, she sighed.

“Are you going to tell me yet why Ani wasn’t invited?” Mel asked before Meredith could speak.

Meredith blinked, then sighed again. “The company your parents work for,” she said instead of answering, “Does it have a name?”

Mel raised an eyebrow. “I mean, it kind of has to, doesn’t it?”

Meredith shrugged, tapping absently on the table. “It’s not like they have a sign posted on the outside of the building,” she pointed out, “What with how secretive and shady they’re being. Do you know what the name is?”

“Diaris Research,” Mel slowly replied. “Why?”

Meredith froze. “Well—” She stopped. Sighed a third time. “I was hoping to have a good excuse by now,” she admitted, “But I don’t.”

Mel stared at her for a moment, her face forming a wide-eyed frown as realization set in. “Oh.”

Meredith curled forward to lean more heavily on the table, as

if trying to hide. "Yeah. Sorry."

"Are you going to—"

Meredith shook her head. "I just... I just need to know more," she said. "It's not like I'm turning on you or something like that."

Mel was quiet for a moment. "Is Ani going to try this, as well?"

Meredith tried to smile, but it came across more like a grimace. "Depends on what she says when I bring it up to her," she replied, then shrugged. "I want her opinion before I commit to anything, anyway."

Another long silence as Mel collected her thoughts. "Alright," she finally said. "Is that all?"

When Meredith returned to her apartment, Ani was in the middle of some sort of sewing project at their table. "Another sock monkey?" Meredith half-jokingly asked.

Ani shook her head. "I'd have to figure out how to make a wire monkey first, so you could have a complete pair," she replied. "This is just a pencil case."

"Huh." Meredith sat down on their couch. "So, I have an idea I want your opinion on, with regards to that whole situation with Mel and the factory and that weird creature."

Ani tilted her head to show she was listening.

"It would be a lot easier to get access to the creature — so that we can help it, I mean — if we didn't have to sneak around as much, right?" Meredith asked.

Ani nodded, a frown forming on her face.

"So, if we tried to work for those scientists — not taking their side, not giving up on the creature, just working for them as a means to an end — that'd help us to help the creature," Meredith continued.

Ani thought for a moment before starting to type. "We'd still be working for the unethical scientists, though," Ani said. "You remember what Mel said. The creature is trapped there, and they aren't even taking proper care of it. And you want us to work for them?"

"I mean, yeah, we'd *technically* be working for them, but we'd also be working *against* them," Meredith pointed out.

Ani shook her head. "But we'd still be working for them," she repeated. "I'm sorry, I'm just not comfortable with that."

Meredith hesitated, then sighed. "Alright. That's fair."

"We can still find another way to help," Ani said. "We aren't going to give up on it yet." She paused. "Right?"

"Right," Meredith echoed.

"There's something I'm considering," Meredith murmured that night, long after Ani had already gone to bed, "But I'm realizing it might be considered reckless, and I want you to come with me." She winced at the memory of Ani saying those same words before they went to explore the factory in the first place.

Ani's words from earlier in the day echoed in Meredith's mind, and she sighed. She maneuvered her mouse to the bottom of her screen and hit 'send' on the email she'd typed up that night.

A few days later, Meredith pulled her coat tighter around herself as she walked downtown, the chill seeping into her bones. She walked up to the factory, pulled open the front door, and stepped inside. She took cautious steps through the hall until it turned into something she recognized, and then she strode down to the reinforced door she'd first seen what felt like ages ago.

Meredith stepped through the door, steeled herself in the cool glow the creature emitted, and reached out a hand toward the glass.



1

Flowers (interlude).



2

1. Sage Milne
2. Sage Milne
3. Sage Milne
4. Ethan Coleman



4



3

Christian Dayward

The Witness

The person I was forty-eight hours ago only exists inside my head. I am dressed in the skin of someone else, someone horrible. My face; eyes, ears, nose, cheeks, tongue, belong to someone new...and my phone can prove it.

They snicker and gossip.

Johnny's a pervert.

Johnny's a pedo.

It doesn't matter if Johnny's smart and ambitious. It doesn't matter if he's denied the accusations, because he's just a disgusting pedophile.

The headmaster is waiting for an update on the investigation so that they can decide my future at the school. This is especially tough on him: I was one of his favorites. My new cheeks turn red as I walk through the hallway to get to my next class, and my new hands start to sweat. Truth is, I'm scared and upset. My family believes me and understands the true context of what happened, but my peers don't have the attention span for that. The fact is, someone hacked my social media accounts and posted offensive claims (extreme versions of what I had said in the past), sent condescending messages to people I dislike, and...this last one is the nail in the coffin...provided links to a child pornography site.

I've been blocked from everything, Instagram, Twitter, and now the police are involved.

I am greeted with empathy by my parents when I get home, they know I've been constantly on edge.

The smell of fresh soup wafts through the kitchen. I already

feel less angry. This house is a sanctuary, a bomb shelter, and I feel the need to stay in it since the enemy has the upper hand.

“Still no word from the investigation,” My mother says, “But I think we should be optimistic. They see stuff like this all the time. I think they’re on our side here.”

“They better be,” My father replies, typing away at his laptop. I sit down at the kitchen counter.

“How was your day, hon?” My mother asks.

Silence.

“John?” she adds.

“I’ll be in my room if you need me,” I say before making my way to the staircase. Afternoon light leaks through my window onto the carpet. I shut my bedroom door and take a seat at my desk. I check my phone. Still blocked. Fuck.

The world seems smaller, claustrophobic, wrapped in quietude. Justice is going awry.

My phone buzzes. A text from an unknown number. It reads: “You should be expelled, you disgusting prick”.

I receive another, different number. It reads: “Fuck you. The world would be better without you in it, fucking pedo”. Please, just let me explain.

Another. Another.

Johnny’s a fly in a glass of water.

Living in the digital age should be rather simple; keep your head down, drop to your knees, pray to the gods of Silicon Valley, and share everything with everyone. But sometimes things get complicated.

I am about to fall asleep when my tired-eyed father gently opens the door to my room and says, “John? We’ve just heard from Officer Belham.”

He takes a brief pause and continues, “His team is working

on the case and are starting to gather some info. They think it's someone who knows you personally. They may ask some of your peers questions. I understand it may be a little weird but try to trust the process."

I'm so tired that it takes a few seconds for this to register. Lifting myself up from my bed, I rub my eyes.

"Is anyone I know a suspect?" I ask.

"Right now, everyone is. We'll have to wait for more details. Hang in there, bud...we'll be okay. We'll find a way through this."

He doesn't turn around before shutting the door.

I open my locker, dump my bag and jacket inside, computer and notebook in hand, and head to my first class, the chime of the bell drawing near.

Henry King, sitting furthest from the door, understands the chaos that is my mind. He knows that the fastest things in the world aren't cheetahs or racecars or jets or bullets, but thoughts. I suppose it's the reason he's the closest thing I have to a good friend. In all honesty, sometimes I think his younger brother, Aidan, may like me more than he does. At least there's no patronizing tone in that kid's voice.

I take a weary seat beside Henry. Stares begin to land on me.

Looking to my right, I find Henry coding again. Captain of the robotics team. Won a district programming contest two years ago. We chat without his face ever lifting from the screen.

Thoughts control my day. I manage to ignore the glances and whispers as I move from class to class. One question burns the edge of my skull like a brain freeze: who did it? Who is the bastard that hacked my reputation? I try not to get red in the cheeks due to anger while in class, although staying calm proves to be incredibly difficult. I'm a shadow on the wall, background music in a busy

cafe. Why would I suddenly be a target?

Final period. I'm almost through this haze of a day. We all pile into class a minute before the bell rings and take our seats. Sharp words slice me from behind.

"Unbelievable they haven't kicked him out yet." A girl whispers to her friend, "I thought he was smart, I thought he was normal. Jesus, you think you know someone."

Stay calm.

Our teacher walks in and greets us.

"The guy's insane. Such a creep."

Stop, please, stop.

"Can you believe the excuse he used? Said he got hacked. He should be arrested for--"

"It's the truth! I'm not a fucking pervert!!" I roar.

A tingly wave shoots through everyone's spine.

Johnny's a liar.

Johnny's a coward.

My teacher looks more surprised than shocked. Two minutes later, I am in the principal's office.

She too meets me with a surprised expression and says, "I hear you cursed at a peer, John. I assume it was regarding your online controversy."

My controversy, implying that this is solely my burden. She knows just as well that this affects the school too. She's trying to guilt me.

"With all due respect, Miss, I won't sit here and be attacked relentlessly--"

Her hand rises and silences me.

"I understand you're angry. Really, I do. But you're far too smart to behave so stupidly. We're already trying to sort out your situation. Don't make it worse."

She dismisses me with a nod.

Your. The nerve.

Two days later, police officers came into the school. Leading the investigation is Officer Belham. He likes me, I think...I hope. Otherwise, the tide is coming in.

"How ya' holdin' up, Johnny?" Belham asks. The smell of coffee puffs from his breath.

"Fine, I guess."

"I get it. This stuff doesn't look good to the public eye. But we'll sort it all out." He continues, "My colleagues and I are gonna be asking your classmates some questions. See, a lot of the posts left on your account were...upsetting versions of your milder opinions. This seems pretty specific and would make sense that someone has it out for you. We've seen this before. You're not the first one who's been accused of this sort of thing."

He stifles a burp. Coffee and tuna...

"How did it turn out for them?" I ask.

Belham hesitates, eventually saying, "Look, you've got us in your corner. Just keep that head up. Alright, get to class."

The urge to vomit is hard to suppress. I encourage the clocks to move faster, every tick mocking me with its sluggishness.

While stranded in History class, I scan the room. Everyone looks like an insect with their long, sticky legs and bulging eyes that could penetrate my concentration in an instant. Insects seem robotic, the way they quickly change positions before you can blink, the way their wings seem like a bed of wires sending electricity up and down, the way light shimmers off their sleek, smooth bodies. Although there is only one disgusting bug among my classmates, they all look ugly to me.

My attention bursts alight when I feel a notification in my

pocket.

From Henry, the message reads: "Hey man, can we talk?"

My heart sinks. Henry doesn't usually want to talk, not like this.

Harsh April sunlight glazes over my eyes as Henry and I leave the building and unlock our bikes. We talk as we ride, Henry's face full of concern. The skin on his hands is dry and cracked, like paint peeling in the heat. Eczema. It's getting bad.

"Police were asking people about your case. They were clearly trying to find a suspect." My case. There it is again. The wind blows roughly through our hair as our bikes skate down the sidewalk.

"You know I'm innocent. This is just part of the process..."

"I know, I know, but one officer really tried to get me to admit something. They tried to get me into detail about my coding."

Thoughts constrict my throat. For a moment, I lose control of my bike and almost swerve into a parked car.

"Look man, they're trying to fit me into a profile. I don't know, I've just got a bad feeling." Henry says, avoiding eye contact. I say nothing.

"John? You alright, man? Are you listening to me?"

"Are you still pissed with me?" I ask sharply.

"Excuse me?"

"You were under a lot of pressure from your family, you know, to excel. The expectations were through the roof," I began, "You told me about how they compare you to me and make you feel like shit. I just--"

"John," Henry remarks, "That's dealt with. It's in the past. We're good now. Wait, what are you getting at?"

The sun's heat is viscous.

"The police told me that the hacker is likely someone I

know.”

“John, what are you saying-”

“You did it,” I snap as I tighten my grip on the handlebar.

“You’re the fucking hacker! You blamed the issues you were facing at home on me and decided to destroy my reputation. I don’t know where you learned to hack social media accounts, but you did it. That’s what I’m saying.”

A silence that probably lasted about five seconds felt the longest of my life.

I try to avoid eye contact, but Henry frigidly stares at me. In my head, I beg for him to say something. He sighs. His eyes drift away from mine, now watching his lap.

“You’re unbelievable,” Henry says.

Rotating to face the way we came, he gets on his bike. The hot wind shifts and travels with him as Henry pedals out of sight.

I take another way home.

Johnny’s an asshole.

Johnny’s alone.

Christmas Day.

“I have to say,” My father begins, “Your mother and I have been extremely impressed with you this past year, bud.”

“You’re becoming a mature and responsible young man, and because of that, we thought we would go big with your Christmas gift this year.”

A gitty thirteen-year-old opens his gift. An iPhone is revealed. Hugs. Kisses.

That evening, after the phone comes alive for the very first time, thirteen-year-old Johnny recalls an app that his friends had

mentioned. It is called Instagram, a place of creativity and opportunity. It is a stage with bright lights and a microphone that catches everyone's attention from miles and miles away. The stage's floor is made of a liquid-like substance, one that creates ripples after every step that is taken. Having grown up with the internet, Johnny was aware of the stage and the millions of seats that lay beyond it.

Picturing himself on the stage, Johnny finds the lights overhead blinding. He is standing in the center, millions of faceless bodies staring at him. He has no props, no instruments, no other actors present, just him. He tries to think of a funny bit he could possibly do, or sing a song he knows, or do something even mildly entertaining. Instead, Johnny simply stands on that stage and takes a bow. The room blares with the audience's cheers and whistles. Hands fly up and clap while a large, glowing smile emerges on Johnny's face. The auditorium fills to the brim with noise. Who wouldn't want to perform here? The stage is the center of the universe, an indestructible haven outside of time and reality.

Thirteen-year-old Johnny, bright-eyed, downloads the app and is born.

The patter of rain sets a solemn mood tonight as the moon is hidden by clouds. I lay in bed, staring at the ceiling, thinking whether tomorrow will be better or worse. It's 1:15, so today, that is. So close to university, so close to my dramatic exit. All I need to do is step off stage, but the encore won't end.

Something harder than a raindrop hits my window. Startled, I climb out of bed and walk over to inspect.

It happens again, a rock hitting the windowpane. Someone in a red raincoat is standing on the lawn, looking up at me. It takes a

moment before I recognize Henry's brother, Aidan. He signals for me to come down. Christ. Carefully, I amble to the foyer and put on my raincoat. I am hit with a wave of cold and rain as I step outside. Aidan walks towards me.

"What the hell are you doing here?" I ask, exhausted, only one eye open.

"Look, I couldn't sleep. Don't have your number. We need to talk." His expression is grave.

"About what?"

His facial expression becomes graver.

"Henry came home angry yesterday, really angry. He told us about your accusations."

I try to wake myself up to grasp the conversation.

"I was upset. I don't even know if I believe it anymo--"

"You were right." Aidan says. The hammering rain seems to recede for a moment as I process Aidan's words.

"Henry hacked your account. He uploaded the posts. It was all him." He stands there not knowing where to look, fists jammed into the pockets of his jacket.

I try to find some confident and stern remark, but it trips over its feet on my tongue.

"Can, um, can I ask why?" I manage to spit out.

The rain folds around the edge of Aidan's hood, streaming down around his face.

"It's hard to say, man. Henry was...I guess still is, under pressure from a lot of people: our parents, his friends, even his teachers. He's never been the most emotionally stable person, so I guess you were the closest outlet." Aidan replies, "What he did was fucked up, and maybe he's just now realizing the mistake he's made. Just, make sure he doesn't go to prison for this, okay? Henry's a good guy, he's just...misguided."

My hands grip my forehead as a slow exhale escapes my lips. I hadn't realized I was holding my breath.

"None of this came from me, okay? I'm sleeping right now." Aidan says.

"Yeah, no problem." I remark, "Thank you for the truth. I appreciate it."

With a nod, Aidan turns and walks off into a sheet of rain.

People have happy places, spots of tranquility and grace away from their problems. Although Henry King likes to cloak himself from the world, I can see under the hood.

When the tension has been too much for the poor bastard to bear, Henry heads to the water to clear his mind. It's six o'clock on a Saturday, he should still be there.

The crashing waves roll up against the pier's beams. The sun is starting to curl down beneath the horizon. Henry is standing at the edge of the pier, arms resting on the fence pillar in front of him, gazing out at the ocean. Couples take photos of the sunset further down.

Parking my bike just in front of the pier, I watch Henry for a moment. My veins should be fiery hot. I should be ready to punch him square in his stupid face. But strangely, I am not furious. The anger is there, but subdued. Instead, I am disappointed.

I was never friends with Henry King, not really. He was just the deepest peer connection I had at a time when I was craving community. He's just another bug.

Hearing my footsteps behind him, Henry turns around and jumps.

"Jesus, man. You scared me." He says, "What are you doing here?"

I stand next to him, lay my arms on the pillar, and look out

onto the bay. The glistening water is a golden hue.

"John, I know that you're under a lot of pressure, I get it. This is scary," Henry begins, "But lashing out at people that care about you won't solve your problems."

He pulls back his sleeves, exposing red, aggravated skin. Henry's eczema has gotten worse. He scratches at it absentmindedly.

A gull swoops at the water in front of us and skims the surface before coming to perch on a pillar further along.

"Pretend all you want," I continue, "I know the truth."

"You don't know shit."

"Really? So I don't know that in a pathetic attempt to prove your worth to your parents, you sabotaged my reputation by hacking my accounts."

"Shut up, asshole."

"So I don't know that your insecurity has bubbled up so much that you're willing to ruin your only friend's life? People have been calling me disgusting all week because of you! Admit it, you immoral piece of--"

I stop, confused as to why he isn't shouting back at me.

The gull, startled, flies away. People further down the pier leave as well as the sun begins to dip below the horizon.

Henry rubs his forehead with the palms of his hands.

"I wasn't thinking. I never thought things would get this bad this quickly."

"But you knew things would get bad." I say, "You were thinking. You knew."

"I'm sorry, John. You have no idea what I've been through."

"I could tell the detectives everything, have you put away."

"Well, it's your word against mine." He remarks.

There is a brief pause.

“Enjoy the rest of your evening,” I say, “The sun looks beautiful.”

I turn around and saunter away, allowing the silence to seep in for a moment.

Hopping on my bike, I ride away until I know I am out of Henry’s sight. I then reach into my pocket and pull out my phone. With a sigh, I open ‘voice memos’ and press ‘stop recording’.

Johnny’s a witness.

Hands fly up and clap while a large, glowing smile emerges on Johnny's face. The auditorium fills to the brim with noise. Who wouldn't want to perform here? The stage is the center of the universe, an indestructible haven outside of time and reality.

The Witness, by Christian Hayward

The person I was forty-eight hours ago only exists inside my head. I am dressed in the skin of someone else, someone horrible. My face; eyes, ears, nose, cheeks, tongue, belong to someone new...and my phone can prove it. They snicker and gossip. Johnny's a pervert. Johnny's a pedo. It doesn't matter if Johnny's smart and ambitious. It doesn't matter if he's denied the accusations, because he's just a disgusting pedophile. The headmaster is waiting for an update on the investigation so that they can decide my future at the school. This is especially tough on him: I was one of his favorites. My new cheeks turn red as I walk through the hallway to get to my next class, and my new hands start to sweat. Truth is, I'm scared and upset. My family believes me and understands the true context of what happened, but my peers don't have the attention span for that. The fact is, someone hacked my social media accounts and posted offensive claims (extreme versions of what I had said in the past), sent condescending messages to people I dislike, and...this last one is the nail in the coffin...provided links to a child pornography site. I've been blocked from everything, Instagram, Twitter, and now the police are involved. I am greeted with empathy by my parents when I get home, they know I've been constantly on edge. The smell of fresh soup wafts through the kitchen. I already feel less angry. This house is a sanctuary, a bomb shelter, and I feel the need to stay in it since the enemy has the upper hand. "Still on edge from the investigation?" My mother asks. "My mother says, 'But I know you should be optimistic. They see stuff like this all the time.' But I don't want to be optimistic. I want to be realistic." I sit down at the kitchen counter. "How was your day, hon?" My mother asks. Silence. "John?" she adds. "I'll be in my room if you need me." I say before making my way to the staircase. After my light bounces through my window into the carpet, I shut my bedroom door and take a seat at my desk. My phone buzzes. A text from an unknown number. It reads: "You should be expelled, you disgusting prick". I receive another, different number. It reads: "Fck you. The world could be better without you in it, fucking pedo". Please, just let me explain. Another. Another. I sit at a desk in a computer lab, my head buried in my hands. I should be rather simple: keep your head down, drop to your knees, pray to the gods of Silicon Valley, and share everything with everyone. But sometimes things get complicated. I am about to fall asleep, my head-cradled laptop on the floor to my right and says "John? We've just heard from Officer Belham." "He takes a deep breath. "I understand it may be a little weird but they think it's someone who knows you personally. They may ask some of your peers questions. I understand it may be a little weird but try to trust the process." "I'm so tired that it takes ten seconds for this to register in my mind. I rub my eyes. "Is anyone I know a suspect through this." He doesn't turn around before shutting the door. I open my locker, dump my bag and jacket inside, computer and notebook in hand and head to my first class. The name of the all drawing near. Henry King, sitting furthest from the door, understands the situation. He looks at the door, then at the robotics team. Won a district programming contest two years ago. We chat without his face ever lifting from the screen. Thoughts control my day. I manage to ignore the glances and whispers as I move by my class. One question burns the edge of my mind like a brain fever: who did it? Who is the bastard that hacked my social media accounts and posted those messages? I stay calm, staying calm proves to be incredibly difficult. I'm a shadow on the wall, background music in a busy cafe. Why would I suddenly be a target? Final period. I'm almost through this haze of a day, all bike into class a minute before bell rings and take our seats. Sharp words slice me from behind. "Unbelievable they haven't arrested him yet. He should be arrested for-" "It's the truth! I'm not a fucking pervert!!" I roar. A tingly wave shoots through everyone's spine. Johnny's a liar. Johnny's a coward. My teacher looks more surprised than shocked. Two minutes later, I see he too meets me with a surprised expression and says, "I hear you cursed at a peer, John. I as- My controversy, implying that this is solely my burden. She knows just as well that this affects the school too. She's trying to guilt me. "With all due respect, Miss, I won't sit here and be attacked relentlessly!" Her hand rises and silences me. "I understand you're angry. Really, I do. But you're far too smart to behave so stupidly. We're already trying to sort out your situation. Don't make it worse." She dismisses me with a nod. Your. The nerve. Two days later, police officers came into the school. Leading the investigation is Officer Belham. He likes me, I think...I hope. Otherwise, the tide is coming in. "How ya' holdin' up, Johnny?" Belham asks. The smell of coffee puffs from his breath. "Fine, I guess." "I get it. This stuff doesn't look good to the public eye. But we'll sort it all out." He continues, "My colleagues and I are gonna be asking your classmates some questions. See, a lot of the posts left on your account were...upsetting versions of your milder opinions. This seems pretty specific and would make sense that someone has it out for you. We've seen this before. You're not the first one who's been accused of this sort of thing." He stifles a burp. Coffee and tuna... "How did it turn out for them?" I ask. Belham hesitates, eventually saying, "Look, you've got us in your corner. Just keep that head up. Alright, get to class." The urge to vomit is hard to suppress. I encourage the clocks to move faster, every tick mocking me with its sluggishness. While stranded in History class, I scan the room. Everyone looks like an insect with their long, sticky legs and bulging eyes that could penetrate my concentration in an instant. Insects seem robotic, the way they quickly change positions before you can blink, the way their wings seem like a bed of wires sending electricity up and down, the way light shimmers off their sleek, smooth bodies. Although there is only one disgusting bug among my classmates, they all look ugly to me. My attention bursts alight when I feel a notification in my pocket. From



Ethan Coleman

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Photography

Helena Nikitopoulos

The Root of the Storm

The roots of a thousand trees
Flicker like fireflies
against the somber breeze
As they dance to the rhythm of the rumbling seas.
Like the wind,
 They transcend
 Whispering riddles of wonder,
 Tales of thunder,
 and stories of hearts torn asunder
Into the world's ears.
Their meandering, delicate limbs
 Illuminate the sky
 like the bones of an x-ray,
 Caressing the darkness with their elongated
fingertips.
As static satin sheets smother the sky,
They reach out for one another,
 So that they may
 Cradle their beloved mothers
 and brothers,
 And stroke the hands of their
distant lovers
Before their time expires.

Nikitopoulos' Constellations

I desperately wanted to wake up that morning and realize that none of it was true.

That my heart hadn't been yanked out of my chest and that I hadn't cried until 3:00 in the morning.

But, as my eyes took in the morning light, I remembered it all.

It was November 6th.

He didn't look at me the way he always did.

He looked annoyed, and his cold eyes flashed back at me with resentment.

He stood several feet away from me, his hands tucked into the back of his jeans.

I tried to talk him out of it, reminding him of the memories we shared, the nicknames he used to call me.

But he kept shaking his head, saying that "it wasn't enough" and that he couldn't do it anymore.

Standing in the pouring rain, watching his body reject mine, I knew then that he had made up his mind.

I lifted my defeated body out of my stain-coloured sheets and walked over to the full-length mirror that stood at the center of my room.

I stared at myself for a long time.

Who was this sad deformed creature with red thunderstorms for eyes and undissolved tears on her skin?

I traced the conspicuous scars on my arms, all of which formed their own constellation.

What's the point now that I'm not yours anymore?

A tear tugged slowly down my cheek, replicating the downward movement of a raindrop on a car window.

Ava, didn't I tell you to stop being so dramatic?

I sighed heavily and wiped the tear away.

Much better.

Walking out of what I think was my Child Development Psychology class, I reached for my phone, wondering if he had texted me saying:

"I want you back," or "I'm an idiot, I can't live without you."

All I saw was a blank screen.

Tears started to well up in my eyes.

Suddenly, I felt the air stiffen in the hall as students' loud obnoxious chatter collided with my quiet anxious thoughts.

You never deserved me.

I began to walk towards the end of the hall, keeping my head down to hide my tears.

You just have to be the center of attention all the time, don't you?

The world suddenly shrank, and I could feel my whole-body tremble under the weight of my sorrows.

I felt my tears soak my shirt, my hair, my neck.

This is exactly why I left you – cause you're so damn selfish.

Suddenly, I ran out of the building, away from everyone and everything.

After reaching a cluster of trees, I fell to the ground just as my knees collapsed underneath me.

I closed my eyes and tried to picture his pale skin and his green eyes under the sunlight, hoping it would give me a sense of peace.

Instead, his furrowed eyebrows and cold stare paralyzed me.

I envied the stars who existed miles away from earth, without worry, without ceaseless thoughts, and without pain.

The Night My Mom Came Back to Me

One night, I heard my dad arguing. I've never heard him yell before; the anger in his voice stunned me. After tossing and turning for what seemed like hours, I decided to listen to what he was saying. Slipping out from under my race car sheets, I crawled to one of the vents in my room and pressed my ear firmly against it.

"You can't keep doing this to me." It was a woman's voice. She sounded sad. Where was my mom?

"I don't care what you think, Lorie. I really don't care." My dad's booming voice confirmed my mom's whereabouts.

"Well, you should, Caleb. You should care." My mom was talking so faintly; I could barely make out what she was saying.

My dad fired back louder this time, "You've never noticed how much goddamn shit I do for this family!" He was using the same voice he uses when I don't eat my whole plate at dinner. I hate fish, he knows that.

"How much you do for this family? I'm the one who works all day, picks Oliver up from school because you always refuse to, and then spend hours making dinner – your dinner!" My mom's voice sounded sterner this time.

But not for long. he broke into a faint whisper: "It's exhausting, Caleb. I can't do it anymore." At that moment, I wanted nothing more than to give my mom a hug and tell her that everything was going to be okay. But for some reason, I couldn't move. I felt as if I had accidentally glued myself to the floor.

Before my mom could continue, my dad shouted back, "Don't you dare give me that shit! I've dropped off the damn

laundry one too many times! And I've always picked up Oliver from school so shut up before I make you, you stupid bitch!" The anger in his voice startled me and my hands began to tremble. I wondered why he had said that; he never picked me up from school.

"Let's just go to bed. I don't want to wake Oliver up." My mom's voice was quiet again. Sadder than before.

"No!"

My dad's voice made me jolt and I almost knocked over one of my favourite Lego sets. Suddenly, heavy footsteps echoed through the vent.

"Caleb, what are you doing?" My mom seemed more frantic than upset now. Not being able to see what was going on made me even more anxious. My heart was pounding throughout my whole body now, filling my ears with its loud incessant pounding.

Then I heard it: a loud screech. It was the weirdest noise I had ever heard, like the sound a cat makes when you step on its tail.

Suddenly, the air was still. So still, that if I stood up, I knew my parents would hear.

I didn't want to make a sound, so I stayed completely still until eventually, I fell asleep on the floor of my room.

The next day, my dad told me that my mom had died from a heart attack and that there was supposed to be something called a "funeral" the following week.

I tried not to cry; I really did. My dad had always said that it was a weakness if men cried because they had to be tough. But from the moment I found out that my mom would never be coming back, I tried holding back my tears until my eyes burned and I had nothing left to do but cry. I felt pain; it was stronger than my aching shoulder from sleeping on the floor. I could avoid the pain in my shoulder, but I didn't know how to soothe the pain for my mother.

I was angry at myself for giving in, for being weak. I thought my dad would be angry with me until I heard him crying one night through my vents.

It was a soft cry, so soft that I could barely hear it at first. When I leaned far into the vent, the air from it tickled my ear. I almost laughed because I am super ticklish, but then I remembered what my mom would have said if she were here.

Now's not the time, Ollie. You have to be on your best behaviour now.

So, I didn't laugh. I just listened to my dad as he sobbed quietly. A wave of sadness washed over me as I thought about my mom and how I would never feel her hand in mine again. I wondered why my parents had been fighting and why they didn't forgive each other. Maybe my dad wouldn't be crying so hard right now if they had made up. A small tear escaped down my cheek and dampened my skin. The only thing that made the sadness more bearable was the fact that I wasn't alone. That, at least, I had my dad.

Later that night, I awoke to a figure standing in my doorway. Their shadow seemed to stretch across all of the walls in my bedroom. I tried to make out their face in the darkness but all I could see were two beady eyes, staring back at me. Suddenly, their head turned ever so slightly, and a few strands of hair fell in front of their face – just like my mom's hair used to do. I noticed that she was also wearing the same blouse my mom had on the last time I saw her. When I called out to her, silence filled the room. Still, I waited, hoping to hear her soft soothing voice any moment.

Eventually, her lips parted, and I heard the words I had been craving for so long now. "Ollie, baby." She cooed back, a soft

smiling spreading across her face. Her voice stunned me for a moment. It didn't sound as soft as it usually did, or as warm. It sounded more squeaky than normal. But watching her stand in the doorframe with a hand on her hip, like usual, I couldn't help but cry of joy.

"Mom, is that really you?" I weakly uttered back, wiping away my tears.

She walked over to the edge of my bed and sat down, her fruity perfume immediately filling my nostrils. "Yes, baby. It is." She grabbed my hand and squeezed it so hard that it started to go numb. When she let go of my hand, it was bright red.

"But I thought you were –" I paused, having trouble finding the right words, "Dad said you were –"

"Your father didn't mean to scare you. I'm so sorry." My mom's eyebrows furrowed together, and her head lowered in defeat. It made me upset to see her like this, so I took her hand in mine, not caring about the pain this time.

"It's okay, mom. Just, don't ever leave us again." While I held her hand, I brushed my thumb against it.

We stayed there in complete darkness for a long time, her hand in mine, neither of us saying a word. Eventually, she got up and bent down to give me a kiss. I felt her warm breath against my forehead and the soft texture of her curls as they caressed my face. I knew that her kiss had left bright red lipstick on my forehead, but this time, it didn't seem like such a bad thing. I watched her walk over to the door and then turn to face me, her hand still on the doorknob.

"Goodnight, my sweet angel." She whispered, her voice still sounding shriller than I remembered. As she turned to close the door, I noticed how her head almost touched the top of the doorframe. I noticed how her muscles jutted out from under her

blouse which seemed way too small for her now.

“Goodnight” I replied. My mom’s head slowly turned to me, her wide jaw mirroring her lips as she smiled. And with that, she closed the door.



Kendra Hancock

Kenneth
Johnson

When the Last of the Ancients Fall

When the last of the Ancients fall, there will be others to take their place. When their final individual stories have been lived and told and their days of basking beneath the lights of heaven and the brilliant sun are done, they will fade gently, quietly, with only a groan common to all living things bound to die. But what will replace them? And would anything ever match their radiance? Or will all that remains be an entropized copy of a semblance from yesterday?

To this I say, there is no answer. For reality and time are too absurd to measure and make any predictions. What I can say is this: they will be missed.

Their long lives stood as testimonials, bastions of life's victory over time and decay. They were timeless entities intermingled with change; the single ingredient that contains the spark needed for life. They were the friendly giants, forever present, forever watchful. As they witnessed civilizations rise and fall and generations turn from historical record into folklore and eventually myth.

How can one summarize a life such as this? How can one describe beings so close to us that we barely question their very existence? To our inferential mind we have relegated them to being nothing but backdrops to our stories. Not worthwhile enough to even play as background characters. To us, they are just props of setting. Nothing more.

This will change when the last of them fall. Their Giant shoulders holding up the sky, holding vigilance without regard or complaint. Their faces like tranquility itself, while their bronze

bodies have been hardened from the strain of their burdens.

Yet, no burdens are enough to destroy their passive inner strength. For their very natures carry within them a kind of harmony that reverberates from the stars.

Their whispers are gentle, light, and comforting.

And their lack will be missed.

Only then we shall notice them!

But not in the way that they deserve.

We shall make some report or another about the fall of the ancients and the travesty of it all. Spreading a firestorm of gossip, a hornet's nest frenzy with activity, that burns none and looks busy.

Buzz buzz buzz

Foolishly we act like this. Foolishness begets foolishness.

We are wise enough to observe, interesting enough to condemn, greedy enough to watch, and emotional enough to cry.

We will never learn.

But from their ashes we will raise a new generation of youth; the next ancient ones, hopefully. They will grow in their natural ways. To hold vigilance again.

Keeping watch over the individual stories, mixing, and churning with one another to form the mosaic of humanity.

With a tragic laugh over them quickly learning that nothing ever changes.

That humanity is as timeless as them, in a certain respect.

All the while radiating a hymn of love, watching our children and their children and their children's children, ad infinitum, grow; until the end of their days or ours.

The Lighthouse

I walked along an empty path. In the barren wastes north of the deep south. Filled with regret and desire; both pushing me on, ever forward.

I sat down in the midst of all that emptiness, the dust conjugating along my pants and I observed nothing and contemplated.

I saw vast distances, of varied decayed lands.

The battered and bruised land cracking with crevices. A tangled web created by terrible power to tear and bind.

Only one sea existed in this dead and dying world. Vast as it was to me, my long running memory knew that it was only a shadowy rivulet of what it used to be.

And in the ever-prowling twilight, the eternal night of toxins and sparkling crackles of light, there existed a lighthouse standing alone on a rocky point.

It seemed newly made, after an older style that the few wanderings tribal people of this time would have no business knowing about.

Its existence made little sense, for there were no ships gliding upon the pitiable mass of acidic droplets.

Yet it shone true.

Casting beams of light that penetrated the darkness.

Casting deeply and deeper into the storm of chemical reactions.

Who built this place?

Who operated it?

And why?

I knew not the answers.

Life's absurdities rarely if ever get answered and only then when its too late.

The lighthouse was surrounded by Jagged rocky teeth, inaccessible, solitary, forever apart and yet its presence intermingled with the soul.

Uplifting and unifying all at once.

There were people who worshipped this place, people who swear that these beams reached them in their heart of darkness, out past the known world in the shadowy lands, leading them home.

It was all pointless anyways. This land was doomed. These people are walking corpses. These myths, fairy tales to ease the passing into the night.

The end of an era is here.

The end of man is here.

I remember hearing once, long ago, that the past lives in today. I never knew what that meant but seeing these people condemned to die due to ignorance and choices made long ago. I can see now, the meaning.

The present is the only time that exists but the past coils itself around us, like an eternal dragon sleepily guarding its treasure.

The sins of the fathers passes on through the blood of generations until it coalesces, clotting the veins.

The past lives on in the present, through the continued suffering of us all.

And yet these people, these sick and dying people have found a light.

Sheepishly they make their pleas

Too afraid to move, too afraid to breathe

And yet hopeful all the same.

It is beautiful to see.

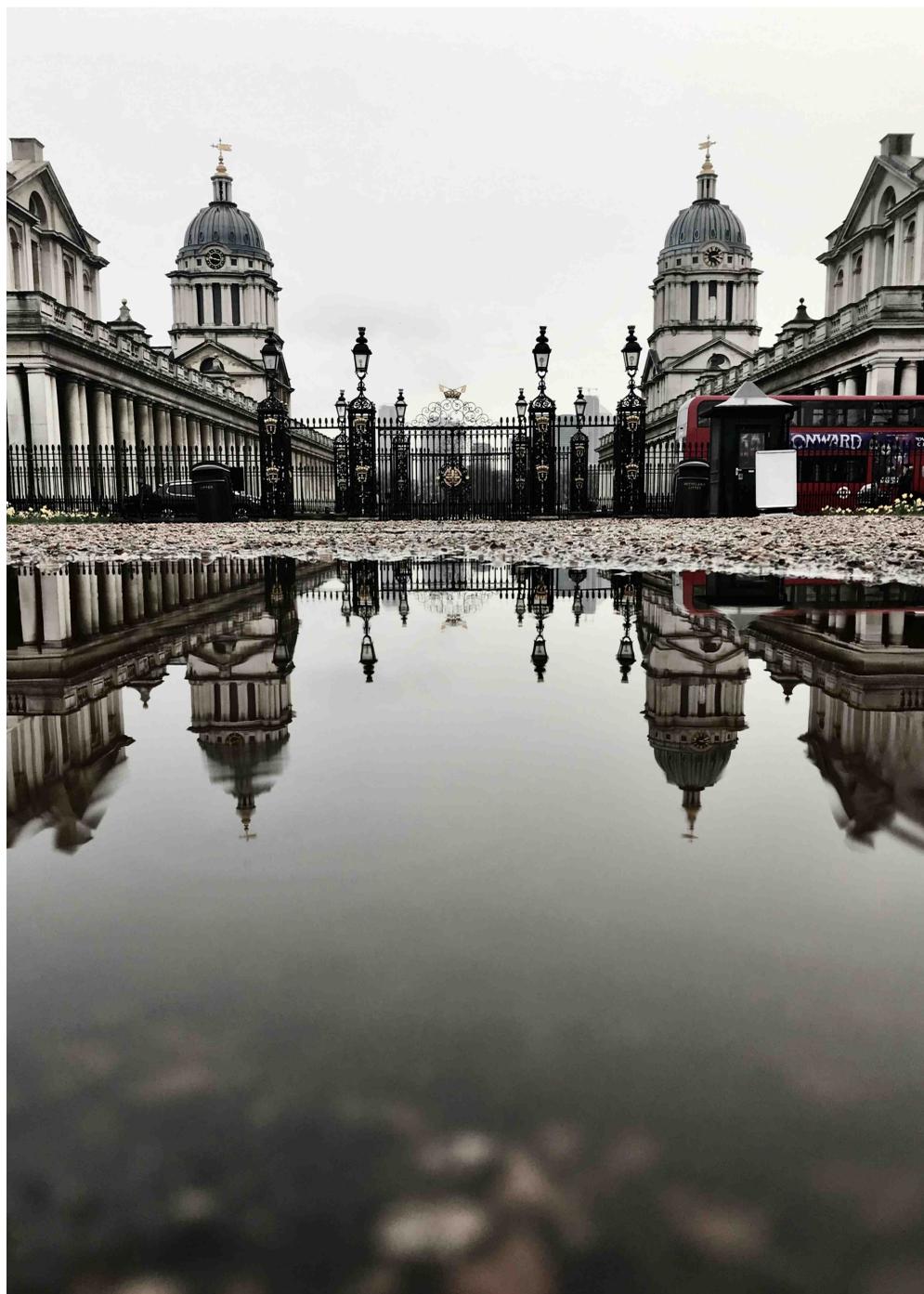
The struggle of life to strive for its own existence despite its futility.

And even more beautiful is the ability of humanity to take this struggle and interweave it with their dreams. Forming something new and yet also so old.

Creating meaning from death, life from the void.

In a futile gesture. A weak and stupid futile gesture. Filled with imperfection, corruption, and greed.

Humanity creates beauty from death, and they find a hopeful path forward despite all ends leading to their doom.



Hamish Fallowfield

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Photography

"The lighthouse was surrounded
by jagged rocky teeth,
inaccessible, solitary, forever
apart and yet its presence
intermingled with the soul,
Uplifting and unifying all at
once."

-The Lighthouse, by Kenneth Johnson

Chloe
Cheung

Sin and Salvation

They say it's bad luck to break a mirror, but I'd break every single mirror in the world if I could. Maybe then reality will match what I see. Every time it's the same stranger I meet - the same shattered figure staring back at me. If the world is a mirror of the soul, what does that say about me? Tired and broken I stumble through life as though in a drunken stupor, haunted by shadows that are no more real than my insecurities but I crumble before them anyway. If I close my eyes my sins disappear but I still feel their presence behind the closed doors of my too-small room. I worship them at the altar and bow at their feet and pray that they will set me free but their words are empty promises and my prayers are lost in silence. My fears are my gods and they are as holy as the scorching sun on a hot summer's day and I care about religion as much as I care about how many words there are in the dictionary. I like going to tea parties with the devil. She's my only friend. Mama always told me that when you don't have any friends you have to become your own. It's almost summer now. I hate the heat. I keep my house at ten degrees because when you're freezing you don't feel as numb.

On good days I feel like I'm walking on clouds spun out of cotton candy. Cotton candy is nice. They call it fairy floss in Australia. The sugar rush I get after eating it reminds me of the merry-go-rounds you find at carnivals. I feel like I'm on a carousel most days. The world's spinning so fast but we're all getting nowhere. It's the illusion of work without any real progress. Maybe one day I'll get so sick of the ride that I'll just jump off. Then I'll

burn all the tickets so no one will be able to go on it anymore.

Bumper cars are more fun anyways. I find that it's a great way to release pent up aggression. These days I want to scream at the top of my lungs but all that comes out of my mouth is silence. It's deafening and I hate it. Sometimes I dream about climbing the Statue of Liberty and just jumping off. Or maybe I'll swim and swim until I can't see the shore and just let myself drift away. Oblivion is my heaven and this bedroom is my personal hell. In the middle of the night I wake up and I hear a baby crying and it's like God is mocking me. I hate living alone in this too-small apartment in New York City but I wouldn't have it any other way. People don't care about you here and that's the way it should be. I don't do anything most days. I just lie in bed and stare at the peeling, yellow wallpaper. It bothers me. So does the crack in the ceiling where water seeps in when it rains. Drip, drip, drip. It drives me insane.

Death comes to visit every now and then. I like talking to him. He's funny and he makes me laugh. I wish he'd come more often. I tell him a lot of things. Like how I'm worried that I won't be able to feel anything anymore. I wonder if I set my body on fire if I will finally feel the pain I deserve. I'm a monster who knows that she's a monster. In a strange, twisted way I find pleasure in this guilt. What I'm really tormented by is the uncertainty of it all. Will I be punished or will I be forgiven? I need to know but I can't know in this ridiculous human existence where I'm stuck not knowing anything at all.

Mother tells me to go to Church and that God will forgive my sins if I repent. I think she's spouting nonsense. The pastors all repeat the same thing over and over again, that God sacrificed his

son to save our souls. Well, I don't want to be saved. I'd like to burn in the fires of hell, thank you very much. The story of Abraham and Isaac? I've heard it a million times, and I've thought about it too. It keeps me up at night. I'm not a believer, but I'm not a disbeliever either. To be honest, I simply don't care. It doesn't matter to me whether or not God exists or not, or if I will be punished for my sins. I just need to know. I want certainty without faith. The desire to know is a flame that burns to its own destruction - and I will be destroyed with it. It consumes my mind and fills me with murderous annoyance. Ignorance is the villain of my fairytale and I'm still waiting for my knight in shining armour. Who will answer my questions? Not even a king is worthy of the glory of knowledge. Knowledge is the illicit lover of the devil. The affair is sweet like honey and pure like milk but the child is a bastard and must be killed. Such is the unspoken law of God. I don't make the rules. What is a mother to do?

My words alone are enough for you to hate me, but I'll give you good reason to truly despise my very being. Let the blame rain down upon me - I shall suffer so nobly and gracefully that you shall all bow down in shame. This child's existence is a crime, so what is to be done? I must kill him. I am no Abraham, but I am a pious woman; my soul is not pure, but I will obey. I climb not Mount Moriah but the Hell Gate Bridge with the child hidden under my coat and I throw him in the water and leave. That is my story. Perhaps it is a tragic one, but I am no more a tragic hero than I am like Abraham. I never named the child, but if I did I would have called him Isaac. I do enjoy a bit of irony. You might wonder if I felt any guilt. To be frank, the fact that I even had a child slipped my mind. After all, what did I have to feel guilty about? I barely considered myself a mother. I had no duty to the child. To have let

him live would be a sin. It was an easy decision. I needed no faith.

I wonder if you're disappointed in me. After all, I admit that my story is rather anticlimactic. Though I never did say that I was a good storyteller. I never said I was honest either. The truth is, I killed him simply because I was curious. I wanted to know if God would stop me like he stopped Abraham. If he did, I would have been convinced that there was a God, and that he was good.

Alas, no angel came to hold back my hand, and now the child cries no more. I am no more certain than I was before, and the flames of my desire burn more brightly than ever. I fear not hell, for what could be worse than this? I am like the parched man in the desert, yet my thirst can never be quenched. The face of the beloved I yearn for is impossible for me to see, and the fruit of our love must be destroyed and buried. You see, I live a tortured existence mired in ignorance and uncertainty. Plagued by doubt, I spend sleepless nights wandering aimlessly within the prison that is my mind, seeking the peace that I can never hope to find. I am a stranger in this town with no place to call home. I think I'm losing my mind. I can no longer see my reflection in the mirror - I don't remember what I look like anymore.

Death comes more often now. I'm glad I have someone to talk to. The apartment is too quiet these days. Sometimes I even miss the sound of his cries. Maybe I did love him more than I thought. He was my first child - my only child - but perhaps I'm just lonely. I have no one to turn to but the devil. The Church thinks I'm a monster and they're not wrong. For them, the truth must remain unspoken but I sing my sins like a hymn and my pride is my Bible. I pray each day that I'll disappear but the next morning I open my

eyes and I'm still here. I don't believe in Heaven, but if I did, I'm sure I'd find its gates firmly shut. What awaits me after death? I don't know. I hate saying that phrase. I don't know. It makes me feel small and weak. Yet I must confess: if you asked me why I killed my child, I'd give you a million reasons just to hide the truth that I don't know. Perhaps I am mad. Perhaps sinners like me shall never find salvation. Maybe I don't even want knowledge at all. Maybe all along I cared for something else, something that I can never get back.

When I stare at my shattered reflection I feel an ache in my chest. I mourn for my lost child and my lost youth and my lost innocence; I mourn for Adam and Eve, for Cain and Abel, for those who live and for those who have drawn their last breath. I pity us all. For what is there in this miserable human life except the absurd? Maybe this is how we are doomed to spend all eternity, stuck in this godforsaken existence like spiders in a jar, trying in vain to find meaning where there is none.



Hamish Fallowfield

FROM THE EDITOR:

Ethnan
Coleman

Huron Revisited

I look up at the weathered spire as I cross the courtyard, on my way to the archives. It rises above the falsely buttressed red brick walls, as it has since Huron relocated to its current location in 1951. A student in 1951 would have seen the same spire that I see now, probably walking in the same footsteps I am. They were the first few students to walk this way, and I am just one of the latest group to do so. The spire would have been shiny and new for them. For me, it has a greenish tint.

Enough wondering. I came today to the archives to learn about Huron's relocation, and I need to make the best of the short time I have. I lower my gaze from the oxidized spire and go over my research plan. I already know about the architects, John M. Moore and his son O. Roy Moore; today I need information about how the drawings became a reality and why it took from 1938, when they were created, to 1951 for the campus to be built. I pull open the door and head up the stairs, walk the short distance and knock on the archive's oak door.

In the archives, I wheel the shelves open and look for the boxes I want. After a minute, I find two: one labelled "Principal's Office (O'Neil)" and the other "Huron Corporation". The first one is heavy, but the second is light. These should have information about Huron's relocation. The contents of the Corporation shift, and I almost drop the box. Returning to the table, I set to work.

When Huron was a creaky, much-expanded former estate home, his father, John M. Moore, created plans for a new campus.

He had a list of things to follow. The college was a mix of residence and teaching. They were a large family, a brotherhood of like-minded and passionately Christian people. The old Huron building evolved from an Italianate home—symmetry, wide cornices, pediments, and pilasters—into an ad hoc monster, a dizzying assortment of additions over 30 years. So, John Moore designed a campus that was laid out like a home—two wings of dorm rooms connecting to a central hallway and a common room in the middle.

His plans were rejected.

The glorious symmetry and strength radiating from the proposed banks of windows and thickly buttressed stone tower were too much for the Huron Executive Council. This was in 1934 and the heart of the Depression. I like to think that John Moore threw up his hands in disbelief, that the rejection was incomprehensible.

John's son, O. Roy Moore, however, did have a pretty good idea of what Huron wanted. Maybe he tried to convince his dad, a classic case of exuberant youth arguing for innovation in the face of the parent being steadfast to tradition. It was his name on the new drawings of a quaint and asymmetrical building that was accepted as the design for the new Huron College. Where the first design was rigid and bold, the new had a sense of tranquility and unfolding in a meandering way.

I open the box and fold the lid over to see a mass of files wedged inside. The folder for 1942 strikes my attention. It has mostly typed letters. Strangely, I find the name O. Roy Moore where I did not expect. I guess it made sense for Moore, the architect, to be in frequent contact with Huron about how the campus design was going to be built. But this letter is not about the architectural plans; it is an invitation to become an advisor to Huron's Executive Council. I

feel the room around me and the thoughts in my head freeze, only hearing my heartbeat. Moore is becoming a buzzword, popping up everywhere I looked for information about Huron's relocation. It seems that Moore was more than just Huron's architect. He was a member of the community; a strong supporter of Huron College.

O. Roy walked up the stone steps to his front door. His keys jingled as he picked out the right one, sliding the others to the back of the keyring behind his hand. The deadbolt slid with a satisfying thud back into the heavy door. As it opened, an envelope on the rug was revealed to him. Stooping, he picked up the envelope and opened it with a deft pull of the backside of his finger. Inside was a letter from the Bishop of Huron, C.A. Seager.

"My Dear Mr. Moore," the letter began. "The affairs of Huron College have been under very special advisement for some months past, by a special Sub-Committee of the Council appointed for the purpose."

Moore continued reading. "We have now been advised it would be well if we can gather together a few of our leading men to consult with us as to the situation. A luncheon has, therefore, been arranged at the London Club, at 1 P.M., Tuesday, November the 10th for this purpose. On behalf of the Committee and the College, I take the liberty of inviting you to be present, knowing that your presence and advice would be of great value."

Moore read the letter over the next four days. He let his thoughts simmer. Or maybe he was just busy with other things. The latter might be closer to the truth, but I prefer the first. It helps me understand Moore as a human, more than just an architectural design machine.

On the fifth day, he wrote up a reply. Sitting in his office, he grabbed paper with his firm's letterhead on it and typed out a reply.

The keys clattered as he wrote the letter. The motion to press the period key was almost rhythmic after having to type out the four abbreviations to introduce the Rt. Rev. Chas. A. Seager. He kept the response short and direct. "I will be very pleased to attend the luncheon," he wrote.

Satisfied, he pulled the sheet out of the typewriter and signed his name. The O seems meek and faint next to the grand flourish of the R and Y in Roy. His signature takes up almost as much space on the page as his one-sentence response.

O. Roy Moore is a captivating figure. He isn't obviously flamboyant, or flashy, as in a story that is so bizarre that you-couldn't-make-this-stuff-up kind of way. No. Rather, it is the absence of information and craziness that I find so interesting.

Moore drew the sketches and attended the meetings, obviously leaving such an impression that he was appointed to Huron's Building Fund Committee right away. When Western moved to the Kingsmill property in 1916, he followed his father – who designed the university's first buildings – and designed the Lawson Memorial Library, among several others. Perhaps these connections endeared him to the Anglicans at Huron.

But where is the charisma? I cannot find it. Maybe it is foolish to look for something so colourful and human in boxes of yellowed old paper typed out in the same garish font. But I don't have a picture of him or anything that he said or did apart from the stiff letter. He is the person behind the scenes that few recognize but is hugely important. His name commands more curiosity than the others, as it moves through documents and committees, like a breeze that you feel but cannot separate from the regular air.

After a week, I return to the archives. I fold the lid back over

again, push the box into the center of the table, and open up another one. This one says “Building Fund”. It seems that there are more records about the lead up to the College’s relocation than about the relocation itself. I pull the first folder out, mark its place, and start skimming through the meeting minutes.

Two names continue to show up: O. Roy Moore and Henry O’Neil. The first is the architect and the second the principal. Why are these two figures so prominent?

The principal’s role in leading the College is obvious. But why Moore?

Sure, Moore was the architect, and he designed the building, so he would know the costs. But knowing the costs doesn’t mean he is necessarily suited to helping create a plan to fundraise. It might even be inappropriate for such an action today.

I try to think this through and guess at what relationship Moore could have had, but I can’t. If only I had a document of a rant, or recorded speech of his, I could get a sense of the man’s personality, his energy, or his opinions toward Huron. I have his name staring back at me from the page, laughing, and taunting me to try and learn more.

Frustrated at being unable to find anything that Moore had said up to 1949, I put back the folder and grab the next. It shocks me to find some sky blue peeking out of the folder, which feels almost blinding after the tan monotony of manila and yellowing paper. The bright document I pull out is a brochure, titled “The Huron College Building Fund Campaign”.

Moore listened as O’Neil and the others explain the fundraising plans. The money for the college would come almost entirely from the Church and nearby parishes. He held the brochure in his hand, looking over the neat breakdown of “the plan”: all

Anglican families in the Diocese of Huron should average a \$10 donation. He glanced over the “why column” on the right side, reading:

New Huron College buildings are urgently needed. The present college rooms are inadequate and overcrowded. Huron college must keep pace with the rapid growth of the University of Western Ontario as a whole. The completed college will stand as a triumphant achievement of the people of the Church and friends of this institution throughout this area—an achievement which should not belong alone to the immediate college family or to the men who initiated the project but to the people at large, throughout the entire area.

Clearly, the fundraising campaign was a success, or else the campus wouldn't have been built. I enjoy reading the brochures because the language and graphics are refreshing breaks from the monotony of formally vague meeting minutes. But they tell me nothing about the relocation. I like to think that Moore was perpetually worried throughout the 1940s—could his participation in Huron's relocation and fundraising be to reassure himself that he'd get paid? I know I would hear alarm bells if I was designing a million-dollar campus for a small college in 1938 that needed to fundraise the entire cost.

It's hard to think of Moore and the Huron group as much as humans as myself when all I know of them is the buttoned-to-the-collar formal meeting minutes and letters. There is probably as good a chance that all the events that eventually happened were caused by some irrational or unanticipated action as they might have been rational, grand schemes.

Carefully folding the brochure and putting it back in the folder, I slowly push the box away as I think of what I should look at

next. I get up and walk towards the back shelf. I can hear my jeans swishing and the muted thump of my shoes on the carpet—it is impossibly silent in the archives. What I really need is something about the opening of the College or shortly after in 1951. The London Free Press archived across the road at Western probably has an article or two that would help.

November 9th, 1951 must have been an exciting day; the new Huron College was officially opened. The headline from the London Free Press, as I zoom in on the microfilm reader, reads “Archbishop Opens Huron College.” On the right side of the accompanying picture is O’Neil, looking incredibly young beside much older clergymen. While I did not expect it, I was secretly hoping that O. Roy Moore would be alongside O’Neil, his colleague of almost ten years. But it is just hope; Moore is not there.

O’Neil resigned from the office of principal a year after the new College was opened. It is strange to imagine working tirelessly for a decade to accomplish something and then not staying to enjoy it when it is accomplished. O’Neil was fairly young, so maybe he was also ambitious. Was Huron’s relocation just the first step in launching his career? He went on to be General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, where he most likely had a greater reach to spread his religion. Was that how he thought of Huron’s relocation, necessary for Huron College so that it could better provide more youth with religious education? Was it just a stepping stone on a career path to what he perceived as bigger and greater things?

I wind up the microfilm back onto the roll and walk back to Huron. The microfilm is across the road at Western’s Weldon library, so on my way back, I can see Huron’s campus as I approach it.

The sky is grey and smooth, and the wind rustles the few leaves that remain in the trees. I look up to see a new batch of yellowed leaves flutter to the ground. Through the swirl of leaves, I see three tall pines in the distance, undulating in the breeze. They are quite stout and bushy, planted in a row, and clearly have been around for a while. Nearby, to the right of the trees, is the Hellmuth residence. I see a few people walking across the concrete paths, cutting a diagonal between the parking lot and the residences. These tall pines were probably planted when Hellmuth hall was built, in 1957.

In the years after O'Neil left, the new campus underwent radical change. For O'Neil, the relocation was the conclusion of decade-long efforts. For W.D. Coleman, it was the beginning of a refreshed Huron College. Hellmuth Hall was built in 1957 and the first women enrolled at the College started to live in residence. The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences was created; arts courses went from being fledgling electives to full-blown degree programs. More students meant the campus was more cramped, so a new library and reading room were built in 1958 to hold 100,000 books. The same year, the Huron Executive Council became the Huron Corporation, when the Lay Representatives—such as Moore—officially were no longer apart of the Huron Executive Council.

There was no mention in 1949 or 1951 that Huron College would have women enrolled and in residence in less than a decade. Nor was there a plan to build the library and reading room in 1958. The only construction anticipated in 1951 was renovations on the third floor of the O'Neil residence for a handful of student bedrooms.

On the 12th of October 1954, O. Roy Moore pulled open the

heavy oak doors and walked into the dim foyer at Huron College. He was here to attend an annual report to the Huron Executive Council by the principal, W.D. Coleman, and to discuss the upcoming third-floor renovations to the O'Neil residence. He was quite familiar with the floorplan since he drew it 16 years before, in 1938. Turning left, he made his way to the dining area for a luncheon meeting.

The room was warmly lit with sconces that gave off a yellow-tinted light. Low, oak-paneled beams ran across the ceiling, with large square blocks at their intersections. Through a row of windows on the right side of the room, the wooded riverbank of the Medway Creek could be seen in the distance.

The meeting began after the luncheon, with prayer by principal W.D. Coleman. The principal discussed the summertime use of the residence and adding soundproofing to its first floor. Next was the question about whether to renovate the third floor of the residence. Moore told the group that the renovations would cost \$100,000 and provide 65 more rooms. It seems that Moore's speech went well; the renovations went ahead since it was agreed that increased enrollment was expected to fill the rooms. Shortly after, the meeting was adjourned.

I walk through a concrete cloister-walk on the exterior of the dining room's bank of windows. It's poured to look like chiseled stone making a ribbed barrel vault, like something out of a church nave. Glancing to the right I can see into the room that many years ago Moore and Coleman ate their luncheon, where they probably queued behind trays of food staying warm, serving themselves portions, and conversing. I wonder if they got along.

Moore was a remnant of the previous Huron, from when

O'Neil and the end goal of relocation occupied much of the Executive Council's attention. The drawings that Huron's Executive Council approved were labelled with his name, not his father's. He was on the committees and attended the meetings when Huron's fundraising campaign was envisioned. When Huron College moved to Western Road, he watched as his designs and picturesque sketches on the fundraising brochures came into being. He participated in every step of making Huron's relocation a reality. But then it all went from plans excitedly discussed in meetings to a physical building. What would happen after? A decade led up to that point and suddenly there was no narrative guiding the efforts of Huron's Executive Council.

Then O'Neil resigned. Did Moore share the same view of Huron's relocation as an end-goal? Was it merely another project in his portfolio? His involvement with Huron was remarkably high for an architect, but it was always able to be traced back to successfully relocating Huron College. Perhaps when it was finally built there was a vacuum, where suddenly a decade-long goal and motivator transformed from a future hope to a present reality. Maybe Moore felt frozen, unsure of what his role was.

All the planning throughout the 1940s for the relocation and nothing was pre-planned for what would happen after. It would be back to the usual classes and events. Perhaps the relocation was the final event for the people involved in its planning and fundraising. Moore, as an architect, would have little architectural drawings to propose if everything was built. O'Neil could walk away from the relocation, satisfied with the accomplishment and legacy of his efforts—which he did in 1952.

After the meeting discussing the third-floor renovations, he was elusively absent from meetings throughout 1955 and 1956. When W.D. Coleman eloquently argued for a new library and the utmost

importance of building a women's residence in 1957—Hellmuth Hall—Moore seemed to be no longer there. Sure, he might've been a lay representative in the Christmas Booklets, but he seemed disconnected from the development of Huron. Or maybe not, maybe he was enthusiastic about the changes happening—I don't know, although to make Moore seem human it helps if I can sympathize with what I assume was a bittersweet attitude towards the new Huron. He accomplished what he set out to do, but at what cost—what changed too much for him to relate to? Was Huron too different, too much like a segment of Western and too little like a riverside estate home?

I climb up the stairs to the library and try to focus my thoughts on the next assignment. To the right, the chapel doors are open, and I hear the hum of the organ diffusing through the air.

The library that I am walking into was built in 1958, by a different architect than O. Roy Moore. I wonder how he thought of some newcomer architect tacking on a new library less than 10 years after his decade-long efforts became reality.

I don't think he would have minded too much. The reading room feels no different for me than Moore's building. The oak paneling, wooden crisscrossed beams, and stone window frames seem to be inspired by Moore's design of the O'Neil residence.

For someone so crucial in defining the relocated Huron that has been imitated by every subsequent addition and architect, the name Moore is oddly absent from the campus. Perhaps the next parking lot or refurbished staircase could be named after O. Roy Moore. Something that does not attract much attention but is nevertheless essential to daily life at Huron College.



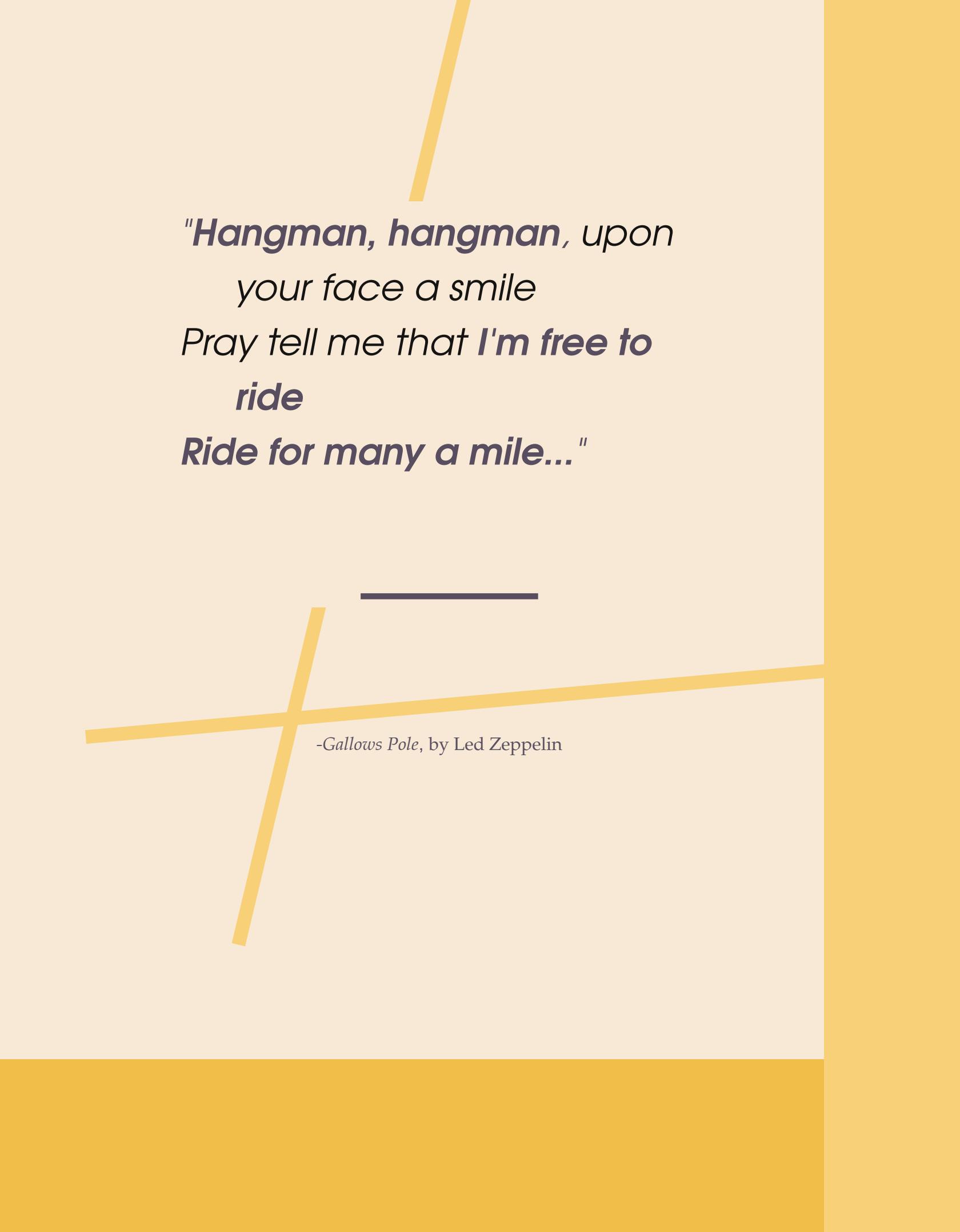
Ethan Coleman



Kendra Hancock

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Photography

The page features several yellow decorative elements: a vertical bar on the right side, a diagonal line at the top center, a horizontal line above the text, and a large 'X' shape formed by two intersecting diagonal lines in the lower half of the page.

*"Hangman, hangman, upon
your face a smile
Pray tell me that I'm free to
ride
Ride for many a mile..."*

-Gallows Pole, by Led Zeppelin

The **Huron Literary Magazine** is a new publication of creative writing, managed, created, and contributed to by the students and faculty at Huron University College, an Affiliate College of Western University.